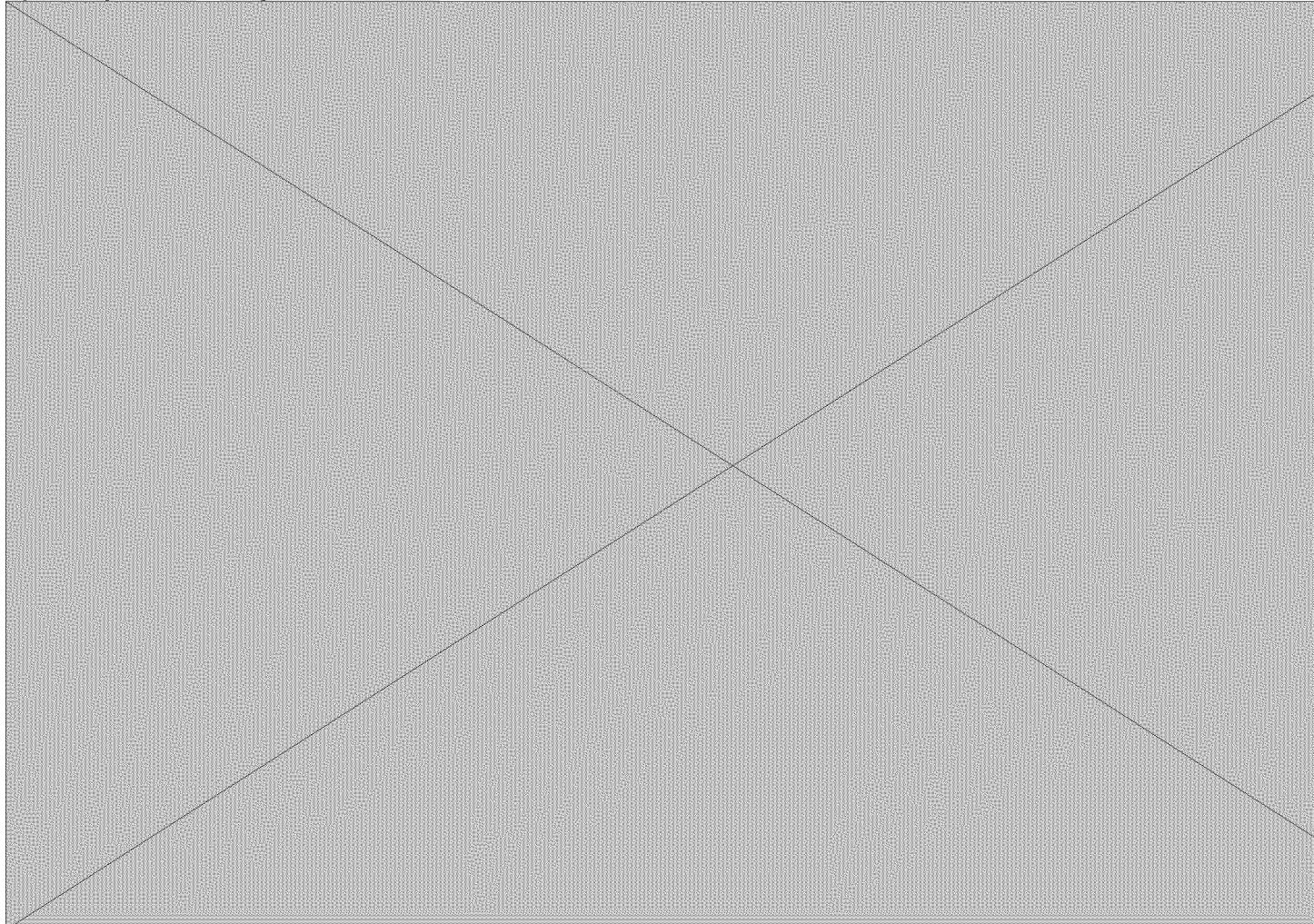


To: searles, zizi[searles.zizi@epa.gov]; Pease, Amanda[Pease.Amanda@epa.gov]; Yee, Wilson[Yee.Wilson@epa.gov]; Chilingaryan, Sona[Chilingaryan.Sona@epa.gov]; Rayman, Jamie[Rayman.Jamie@epa.gov]; Duncan, Will[Duncan.Will@epa.gov]; Tenley, Clancy[Tenley.Clancy@epa.gov]
From: Reeves, Linda
Sent: Mon 8/17/2015 1:17:40 AM
Subject: Navajo Times press on Nenahnezad meeting

San Juan may reopen today; tribe holding out for more results

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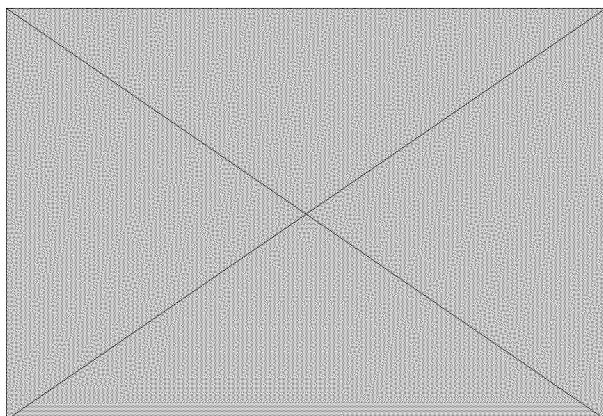
by Cindy Yurth , August 16, 2015



Upper Fruitland farmer Lenora Williams expresses her frustrations to EPA remedial project manager Zi Zi Angelica Searles about the problem the office she represents caused Saturday night during a meeting at the Nenahnezad Chapter. (Times photo –

Donovan Quintero)

NENAHNEZAD, N.M.



Lynlaria Dickson from Upper Fruitland becomes emotional while speaking about her daughter and San Juan River during a meeting at the Nanehnezad Chapter House Saturday evening. "To you Vice President and Speaker, don't release the water, I don't want my children to get sick," Dickson said to Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez and Navajo Nation Speaker of the Council LoRenzo Bates. (Times photo – Donovan Quintero)

San Juan County CEO Kim Carpenter hopes to lift restrictions on using the San Juan River by Sunday afternoon, he told about 160 people who packed the Nenahnezad Chapter House Saturday afternoon to hear an update on the Gold King Mine spill from tribal, state, county and federal officials.

Carpenter said after flying over the river in a helicopter and going over water test data, he is convinced the San Juan is safe to use 10 days after a dam at the mine near Silverton, Colo. was accidentally breached by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, sending three million gallons of metal-laden mine waste down the Animas River and eventually into the San Juan.

However, test results have only come back from the area east of Tse Daa Kaan, N.M., and Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez urged Navajos not to start using the water yet.

"We want to wait until they flush the ditches upstream and then take samples," he told the crowd of mostly farmers and ranchers, noting that flushing the irrigation ditches could stir up heavy metals in the sediment, polluting the river again.

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt/Casamero Lake/Counselor/Littlewater/Ojo Encino/Pueblo Pintado/Torreón/Whitehorse Lake) wondered why it was necessary to flush the canals at all.

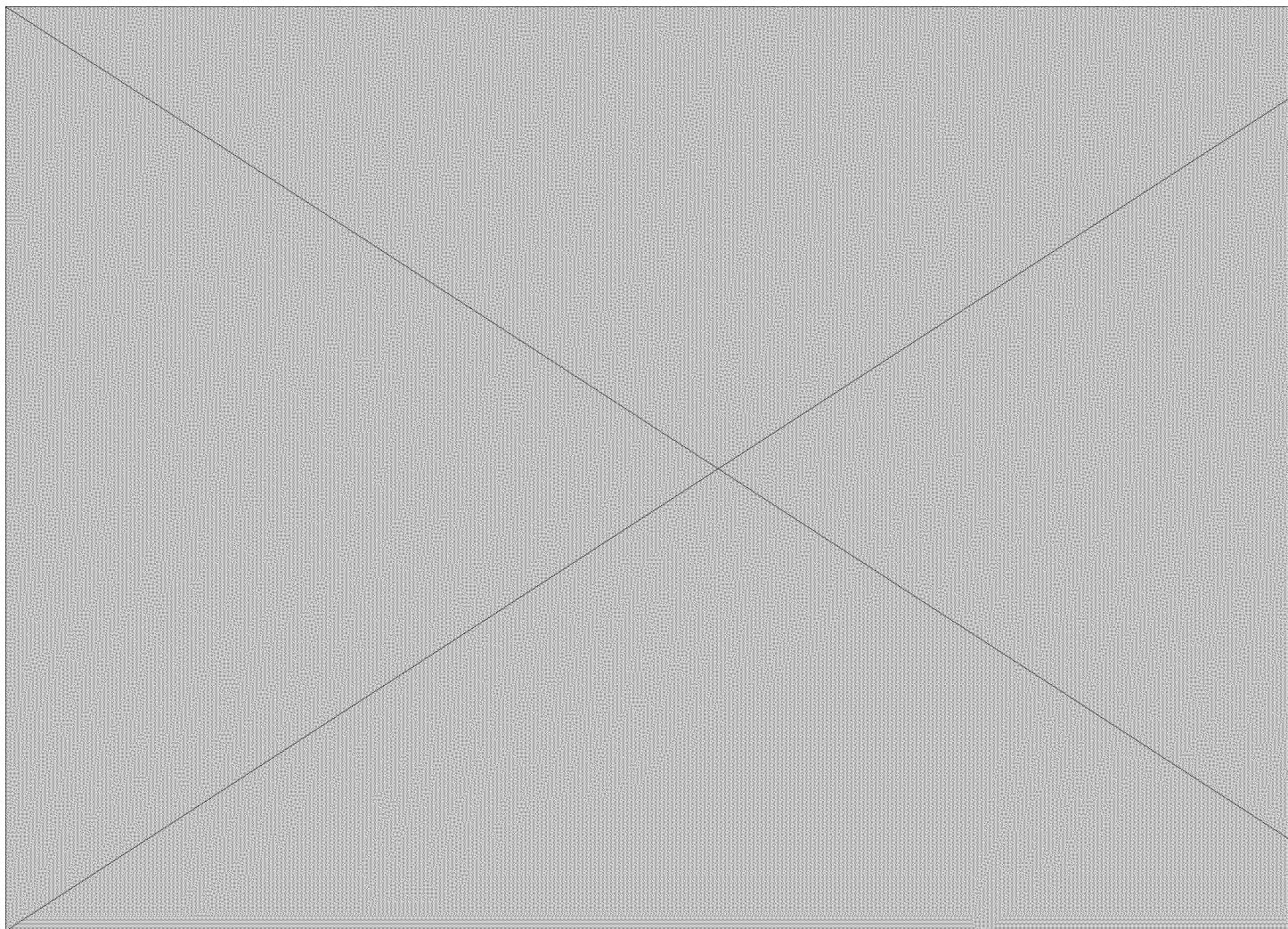
"Flushing means all the stuff is coming at us again," he told Carpenter. "If you care about us, don't flush."

Bonnie Hopkins, county Extension agent for San Juan College, said the decision to flush the canals was not made lightly.

"Every single test, whether it was done by private individuals, the state or the county showed the same thing," she said. "The total metal levels in the water were below safe drinking water limits."

Tests show sediments left by the spill also are not particularly toxic, she said, noting that according to the New Mexico secretary of environmental health, a child could eat two teaspoons

of the soil every day for 60 days and not get sick.



Ripples form as the San Juan River flows down by the Upper Fruitland, N.M., area last

Saturday. (Times photo – Donovan Quintero)

Carpenter said there has been no evidence of harm to fish or wildlife, although the fish are still being evaluated as to whether they are safe to eat, since they tend to concentrate some heavy metals in their bodies.